

Some Stirring Reminiscences of the Faithful Warfare of Two Veteran Army Leaders who, following valiant service in many lands, have Answered the Summons which Called them Home

ONE MAN'S AMAZING DEVELOPMENT

In Fifty Years Commissioner Unsworth Surmounted the Limitations of an Inexperienced Provincial Lad and Became one of the Best-Known of Army Officers, Loved by the Lowly and Received by their Majesties the King and Queen

COMMISSIONER I. UNSWORTH, in the course of his fifty years' Salvation service, became one of the best-known Salvation Army Officers; his important and varied duties, which for a brief period included the Editor-in-Chiefship, frequently took him into the presence of prominent personages and involved visits to



Commissioner Unsworth

Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament. His travels in many parts of the world (and his sterling comradeship was always a source of strength and inspiration to those whom he met) and his appointments in England, Holland, Africa, Ceylon, and Australia, introduced him to a still larger circle of people.

A native of Consett, in County Durham, the Commissioner was much impressed by The Army's entry into the town. After attending meetings for one or two nights he was among the many of all sorts who were seeking Salvation under the guidance of the Christian Missionaries.

Thereafter the young convert used to get some friends together and conduct Prayer-meetings in the factory where he worked, meetings which were the means of leading others into Salvation.

The energetic recruit was greatly helped by the Founder's visit to his home town. Describing the experience the Commissioner once said:

The Founder's Influence

"His words seemed to go right through me as he talked about the Work in other parts of the country. My heart was stirred within me to go out and help to rescue the perishing. After a great deal of prayer I offered myself for the Work and was accepted and sent on to Manchester."

So began a wonderful fifty years of Officership, for the inexperienced provincial lad—fifty years in which he was to adventure forth in the name of God, and in which he was to come before many great ones of the earth.

That first appointment in which the Commissioner saw wonderful evidences of the work of God in the hearts of sinful men and women, was followed by equally blessed experiences—amid hardship and persecution—at places like Runcorn, Salisbury, Hull, and Bristol.

During those early years of turmoil and toil the Consett boy made time for self-development, and although he knew nothing of the usefulness to which the future was fast leading him, he carefully laid, in those

days, some splendid foundations.

Sometimes the Founder, impressed by his initiative, ability, and goodness, would take the young Corps Officer with him that he might share Councils of War.

With other Army pioneers the Commissioner had experience of stonings, execrations, and abuse. When he was in charge at the "Old Grecian" he and his comrades were more than once attacked by gangs of roughs. Brickbats dented their instruments, clothes were torn off or slimed with rotten eggs and decaying garbage, while often the Commissioner emerged bleeding from cuts inflicted by the attackers.

Widely-Travelled

Faithfulness in Corps appointments and The Army's rapid extension overseas marked the Commissioner out for greater responsibilities, and he was transferred to South Africa and Jamaica before being appointed to take charge of the Work in Ceylon. He afterwards held various staff appointments in Australia.

The Commissioner, who was a Fellow of the Royal Colonial Institute and made an O.B.E. for his war service, was one of the best travelled men in The Army, and wherever he went his undoubted gifts of utterance deeply impressed his hearers and led many to shape their lives in line with the purposes of God.

During his fifteen years in Australia he made coastal trips northwards to Java, and southward to other islands, and some of his experiences were by no means devoid of peril, but always Isaac Unsworth was conscious, like Paul of old, that One was with him.

A Zealous Reformer

An experience which provided the Commissioner with a new knowledge of life came when he was appointed to make a comprehensive tour of the casual wards of Britain in the interest of The Army's Social Work. He did much to develop The Army's worldwide Anti-Suicide Bureau, and fulfilled many important and delicate tasks.

In the years immediately preceding the war it became known that hundreds of British girls were trained as dancers, "appointments" then being found for them in Continental cafes of low repute, and the Commissioner was appointed to investigate. During the period when he went to the lowest haunts of Brussels, Berlin, and Vienna in search of evidence of this trade he was often in danger. Cafe proprietors and their Apache friends had no use for this zealous reformer, and as a consequence the head of the Surete in Paris thought it necessary to provide him with an efficient, though unobtrusive, body-guard.

His success in this attracted the notice of the late Lord Kitchener, who had determined to make a massed attack on the touts and procurers of Cairo, Port Said, and Aden. During the war the Commissioner also spent many months travelling from Alexandria to Gallipoli, bringing comforts to war-worn men. Although every ship in which he travelled was eventually mined or torpedoed, he himself escaped injury, even when thirty-six shells from "Beachy Bill" passed over his head whilst he was making for the beach.

To have travelled several times round the world in the service of God and The Army, to have sat and recounted his adventures with the King, to have had special audiences with the Queen—these are experi-

NEARLY SIXTY YEARS AN OFFICER

Commissioner Ridsdel, who was The Army's Oldest Officer, Entered the Service before the Drum was Heard, the Guernsey thought of, or the Bonnet Invented. He Served with Distinction and ever displayed Zealous Salvationism

ALMOST sixty years ago a minister wrote to the Founder regarding a young man named Ridsdel, in his church. He said he thought the young man would make a good helper in the work William Booth was doing among the submerged masses. Young Ridsdel, knowing nothing of the step his minister had taken, was greatly surprised to receive a copy of "Heathen England," and later a letter asking him to visit London to see The Army's Leader.

"I went," said Commissioner Ridsdel in describing his call, "and was at once drawn to the Founder. I had a long interview with him, and then had to preach before him in the old Whitechapel Hall. Not being accustomed to London I was nervous, but the presence of the crowd soon fired me up, and I forgot myself to such an extent that I fell off the platform."



Commissioner Ridsdel

At the time of his conversion, in a little Yorkshire village, he was quite unable to read the Bible, but with his change of heart had come a thirst for knowledge. The convert bought a copy of the Scriptures and a dictionary, and with these two was soon able to read the third chapter of St. John's Gospel quite unaided.

The raw young Yorkshireman developed considerably between that early awakening and the time when he made the epochal journey to London.

His first meeting in the Metropolis took place in the Open-air. He and an Officer attached to the Headquarters in Whitechapel Road took their stand in the street, but they had no sooner commenced than there was uproar. His companion was seized by the

beard and held a prisoner for some moments, and the new Salvationist thought that he, too, was going to suffer by their violence. They enjoyed even that meeting, however, for it ended with some captures for Christ being made.

The Commissioner's first appointment was to Portsmouth, where The Army Mother had commenced a glorious soul-saving work. In Soho, a subsequent appointment, he and his comrades were subjected to trying abuses. Butchers would throw much objectionable refuse at the Salvationists. But in spite of the opposition, at Soho, as at Canning Town, Chatham, Middlesbrough, Cardiff, Bradford, Plymouth, and other Corps, he saw many of the most notorious sinners getting saved.

His Field experience fitted him to take some of the responsibilities for which able and consecrated men were needed in the days when the foundations of The Army were being laid. Divisional and Provincial appointments were filled with much success long before the Commissioner became Secretary for Scotland.

First Bonnet-Wearer

The late Mrs. Ridsdel, who was promoted to Glory in 1890 and zealously supported her husband in his work for God, was the earliest comrade to wear The Army bonnet. The first of a mighty host! The Commissioner ever testified of the graciousness of God to him in the way he had been so nobly helped.

It was in 1894 that "The War Cry" reported a "Wedding and Sixty-five Souls," Commissioner Ridsdel, at that time the Territorial Commander for Sweden, was married to Mrs. Staff-Captain Mobley.

As the late General said at the Commissioner's wedding, which he conducted, "The Commissioner entered the service before the drum was heard, the guernsey thought of, or the poke-bonnet invented."

Mrs. Commissioner Ridsdel, during thirty-seven years, had been a source of help and courage and inspiration to her husband, whose wonderful career was interwoven with the progress of the War in the North, South, East, and West of England, and in Sweden.

Subsequently the veteran warrior commanded The Army's activities in South Africa, Norway, and Holland, with equal distinction.

His zealous Salvationism and his unflinching pertinacity made him a valued leader of our fighting forces in those days of opposition.

Although he had actually been the oldest Officer for eighteen years, the Commissioner campaigned until comparatively recent date. His Home-going severs yet another link with The Army's glorious beginnings.

ences of which the Commissioner might well have been proud, and yet there was nothing of pride in his bearing, and his greatest glory was the winning of souls for Christ.

What he said of the Founder was true of himself: "To put his theology into a nutshell, it is, in his own words, Salvation—from every sin, for every sinner. His philosophy of life was applied common sense. A firm believer in the gospel of work, he would not expect any good to come to a man except through thoughtful, honest effort."

There was in all the spirit of the Commissioner's sterling comradeship and his genius for making friends an undoubted gravity to be reckoned

with, as when he said: "The world has great and intricate problems. There are social inequalities; differences between the masses and the classes; there are the overfull and the starving. These things—so apparent and so real, and causing such trouble and distress in the world—do not permit of trifling."

Though he believed in every proper effort to improve the conditions of the workers, for whom he was such a level-headed champion, he ever knew and advocated that it was the Salvation of the individual which counted, and here, too, he was like his grand old chieftain, the Founder, who believed in keeping soul-saving first and last all the time.